**THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY**

**COUNTY COMMITTEE**

A Meeting of the County Committee held on Tuesday 16th February, online via Microsoft Teams at 19:00

In attendance:

Jackie Robertson, John Moloney, James Brimble, Carole Hoban, Bob Perkins, Ian Campbell, Kay Scase, Chris Boskett, Kate Reynolds, Anna Acott

Non-voting:

Emma Shepherd – MSO, Garry Mills - MC Rep, Anny Reid - County President

Guests:

Roy Roberts, Tim Godden, Newent Chairman

**AGENDA**

1. Exhortation
2. Apologies
3. To Close the Agenda
4. Declaration of Conflict of Interest on items on this Agenda
5. Minutes of previous Meeting

Proposer: Anna

Seconder: John

1. Matters arising from those Minutes

Frampton Cotterrell - can we check what the funds are going to be used for?

Roy has not had a response to his BPT question – Emma will forward the response from HQ after meeting

1. Chairman’s Report

Good evening

I have not yet been anywhere or done anything exciting yet this year. Hopefully that will change soon.

To start I would like to say a huge thank you to Ian Campbell. I’m sure most of you have seen the Facebook page and our County web page being updated over the past few days. It looks a lot better already. He has also come up with a new design for County newsletter that will go out monthly, in addition to the updates that Emma sends. We would like to include anything that your Branches are doing please send to Ian or Emma.

Training- the Training team are hoping to start online training soon. Starting with a small group for Branch Management Training. We have had a few requests so hopefully we can get moving with this and keep it going through the year. County Management Training would be useful as the last training was a few years ago.? Opinions?

Legion 100. The subcommittee need to chat and come up with 2 plans for our 100 commemorations, an ideal plan, a small plan and a lockdown plan. Also, for ANZAC. I don’t think a full Parade will be possible, but we can live in hope

Mentoring This year will be different. We are going to concentrate on the Branches that need help or support and the Branches that we don’t receive paperwork from. We did really well this year with getting Accounts and MS1s back, but still have a few that don’t do some or all of it. We haven’t decided who and where yet so will email it to you soon

Anny would like to be involved with Anzac if at all possible

Bob- Can women’s section be invited to anything please. Yes of course.

Training, John M and Anna both fully agree with the need for County training.

1. Reports
   1. Membership Support Officer Update

It has been a busy six weeks since the start of the year as we have barrelled head on into lockdown number three. However, I am very proud of how the committee pulled together in difficult circumstances to put on a fantastic and smooth-running Conference as they did. The day went ahead without the technical problems and horror stories I had heard from some other MSO’s, and my biggest concern was with keeping everyone’s microphones muted, it was beginning to feel a little like a game of whack-a-mole towards the end, and I did wonder if some of you were doing it to see how quickly I would notice! You wouldn’t do that now would you?

We have some new faces on the County Committee which is exciting with some fantastic changes coming which I hope to be able to share with you all soon. I want the county to work together going forward as one unit, helping one another, because there is strength in numbers, and it feels really good to know you have helped someone else.

Jenny Wilson is still away from the office, so the area team is still being covered by Craig Spence the Area Manager Plus, and as we have been for nearly 12 months now staff remain working remotely across the charity in all departments.

Bob – Can the County standard have the 100-year pennant? Emma to check.

Do we know how old the County is?

* 1. County Treasurer – Currently in handover
  2. Community Fundraisers – No reports

1. Agenda Items
2. Thank you from Yate and Sodbury Branch - Chris

Thank you to David Gargett from Hardwick branch, offered £100 to put towards the debt owed by Yate and Sodbury Branch.

Thank you also to Larry at Thornbury branch who have also paid £100 towards the debt.

John – Stoke Gifford has sent a cheque for £125 to help. Any extra can go into the County fund.

It keeps being brought up for no reason at all, and it is amazing for this to now be paid off. Stow may also be paying off another £100. This has restored my faith in the RBL.

1. County Gazebo - Kate

The county gazebo needs some love! It needs rebranding and repairing, it is broken and out of date.

We can get it fixed for approx. Atwolls £1,100

3x4.5m Gala Tent – 5-year warranty Branded, new logo, £909

Garry – Glos City are buying 2 gazebos; Cheltenham are buying 1.

Membership seal not included in the new membership logo

Cheltenham are looking at smaller gazebos and the price of the county one sounds reasonable. If you speak to Mark Paveley he would be able to give you Glos Cities quotes.

Ian – Marketing dept have produced the artwork for gazebos, it is on SharePoint, we must use that. I also have a contact for gazebos.

Jackie – are we all in agreement? Yes. Kate, can you please move this forward?

1. Committee Size/Further Co-options - Kay

Are we at the bare minimum? Yes

Not a good idea, I suggest some more co-options

Propose Stan Rudge

Garry – if there are problems with the branch we need to look into this further, as anyone on the county committee needs to have the backing of their branch.

AOB

Kay – has anyone seen a black and white copy of the new logo? The poppy disappears. This needs to be discussed with HQ?

Bob – for Garry – There is talk of a national standard bearers’ competition. Should this be going ahead?

Standards cannot be paraded at the moment so therefore you cannot have a competition.

Anny – Probably have a digital conference, although not decided yet. But this will mean no competition.

Kay – Almondsbury standard – What has happened with this? John This has now been dealt with, the standard has been laid up and will not be paraded again.

Bob – Is Billy interested in becoming a SB?

Garry – I broached the subject with him, but it was just before lockdown. I offered him appropriate training through the County.

Conference committee have met, and our chair is Kate, we are now looking to co-opt other members

Email from Roy Roberts, Chairman Cheltenham Branch

Emma

Thank you for your two emails from Friday evening. I have several comments for you and County Chairman regarding the County Committee meeting which I now see is tomorrow evening Tue 16 Feb at 1900, with a link available for branch members to join, and a request for questions to be raised in advance.

Emma, Jackie - my comments to you for response are:

1. Meeting timing and notice to branches. MSO issuing emails were 1733 and 1737 hrs on Fri 12 Feb, announcing a County Committee (CC) meeting for the following Tues evening. This does not give branches sufficient notice either of the meeting itself or of the opportunity to canvass branch members/committee to identify and submit questions for the CC. I put a question to the CC for the 12 Dec 2020 meeting in time for it to be included in the published Agenda for that meeting. By the way that Agenda showed the next meeting as 23 Jan.  As volunteers, I and I’m sure others, don’t monitor our emails 24/7 and so after 1700 on a Fri and over the weekend, I shouldn’t have to check emails for the MSOs Newsletter and information of an important meeting happening imminently. Why is the timing of the Feb meeting and its paperwork issue so late?
2. Agenda and CC Meeting Minutes. The revised Agenda (1737 issue) notes at Item 4 "Minutes of previous meeting". It is protocol (as evidenced by the helpfully circulated MC Minutes of 20 Jan 2021) that the date of the meeting in question is quoted, and thus Item 5 - Matters arising becomes more relevant. Despite having raised a question at the 12 Dec meeting, I have not seen a copy of those Minutes and they weren’t included in the pack sent to branches by MSO Fri 12 Feb - at least not in my email. Following information, I received as to how my question was dealt with (I couldn’t attend on 12 Dec) it was clear that my question hadn’t been fully addressed so I emailed MSO and County Chairman on 11 Jan at 1044 for clarification; I have yet to receive a response a month on, and two months since the Committee meeting. Without sight of the 12 Dec Minutes, how can I now, at this late stage, raise a "Matter Arising"?
3. County Committee composition. I note this is to be discussed at Item 9c. The list of Committee members - helpfully provided by Jackie as part of MSO email Wed 10 Feb at 1721 - has a confusing entry at line 4 "Auditor/Independent Examiner" - Charles Tippet (please note correct spelling of surname) - Cheltenham. It could easily be inferred that Charles, who is Treasurer for Cheltenham, is a member of the County Committee, an Auditor and IE of the County's Accounts and the only appointed IE in the County. He is none of these things, having merely volunteered, as have others, to undertake IE of branches' accounts, completing some 9 such examinations for 2019/20 branch accounts. Please remove his details and revise the list to clarify.
4. It would be informative for the corrected list to be published with the details of branches members belong to, and who has a vote (I believe Carole Hoban attends as PM and as Chair County WS; and County Secretariat - Ian Harrison presumably is also non-voting and a non-committee member).
5. Appointment of new Treasurer. You noted that the Treasurer, as an appointee, doesn’t have a vote, but as the individual has been co-opted to the Committee and given a role, presumably he has a vote. Again, clarification would be useful.
   1. Finally, on that appointment as Treasurer, I am not disputing the appointment process as described. However, I am surprised that this has happened on 3 Feb, less than 2 weeks after the County Conference when that Conference unanimously accepted presentation of the County Accounts by Allen Warren and indeed thanked him for his dedication in resolving long - running issues with Head Office.  As it was reported that Allen had offered his services for a further year but was rejected by a majority, what was it that concerned the Committee about his further service when it effectively passed a vote of no confidence in Allen's abilities by accepting a volunteer in his place? There doesn’t seem to have been a wider request across the County for a volunteer to come forward to take on the role in this intervening very short period - why the urgency?
6. Question for the Committee
   1. Centenary plans. With only 3 months to go before May's RBL Centenary, and having just seen the article in Legion Magazine (February page 43) that Norfolk County are well advanced with their plans, what options have the Glos County Committee considered and is aiming to circulate to members?
   2. As one of the 7 branches in the County formed in 1921 (admittedly the junior such, dated 28 Oct 1921) we at Cheltenham are naturally waiting for Head Office instructions, are working on parochial plans, but would be pleased to join with the other 6 in a County-sponsored event. We believe the other branches are Slimbridge (7 Jun), Blakeney (2 Jul), Cinderford (2 Jul), Westbury (16 Jul), Forest Green and Nailsworth (as Nailsworth 5 Aug), Minchinhampton (28 Aug); MSO will know which of these are still active of course.

I trust you will consider the above as constructive input - that is my intention on behalf of my Committee and 100 plus members.

Response to items not already covered by the meeting.

Mr Roberts suggested most of the items had already been covered in the meeting, however Emma explained Jackie and herself had spent several hours during the day dealing with the email and felt responding fully may explain the situation more clearly for Roy so that the same questions are not asked at the next meeting as they have been at previous meetings, thus saving time for all concerned.

Meeting timing and notice to branches

You are able to send questions for the committee at any time to me or the committee regardless of when the next meeting is. This is a County Committee meeting and the people who need to be there have been aware of the date and time since the appointments meeting when it was decided, branch members are invited to come along should they want to.

The next meeting after the December meeting was on the 23rd January, it was the AGM, you were present.

Agenda and CC Meeting Minutes

I circulate the minutes after they have been approved by the County committee.

If I can point you to the Membership Management Handbook, page 11. The minutes of County committee meetings only need to be distributed to the committee plus the Membership Council Representative and the Area Office. We distribute them to the county branches for full transparency, but only after they have been approved and not before.

A response to your request in December was forwarded to the relevant team in Haig House and then forwarded onto you at the time. It was explained in the meeting that this was not a County Committee matter, this was between you and them. If you have not received that I can forward it onto you again, just let me know.

I have contacted Charles Tippet directly regarding this and await further contact.

**Date & Time of next meetings – 20th May 19:00**